

Go the Distance

THERE'S NO FINER WAY TO EXPLORE THE COUNTRY THAN A MULTIDAY BIKE-CAMPING TOUR. BUT BEFORE YOU SET OUT, YOU NEED THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT — WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

by T.R. FOLEY

► **THE BIKE** Cyclocross bikes were invented for winter mud racing, because participants needed a ride that could jump like a mountain bike and corner like a road bike. But their creation is also a boon to the tour cyclist: It's strong enough to support you and all your gear, and its wider wheel base significantly reduces vibrations, providing a smoother, more comfortable ride on a variety of surfaces. Buy a size down (for example, a 58-inch frame becomes 56 inches), because smaller bikes have a shorter distance between seat and handlebar, which will ease the strain on your lower back. The Specialized Tricross Sport is an entry-level cyclocross that comes with Mavic rims — among the most durable — and Shimano Tiagra components, which provide fluid shifting between nine gears. The bike's frame is also designed so that the extra weight of the saddlebags won't destabilize it (\$1,400; [specialized.com](#)).

► **SADDLEBAGS** You'll make two demands of your bags: that they hold all your gear and that they keep it dry. A pair of the Ortlieb Bike-Packer Plus has a combined volume of 40 liters. And they're waterproof (\$225/pair; [ortliebusa.com](#)).

► **TIRES** Get yourself tires that resist punctures and ride smoothly in a variety of conditions. Infinity Armadillo Elite Reflects are made partly of Kevlar, and their knobby centers grip wet roads, while their rounded edges ensure stability through corners (\$65; [specialized.com](#)).

▲ **SEAT** For those long days, think comfort first. The Brooks Flyer Aged Saddle weighs more than modern seats, but its leather, treated with tallow, breaks in quickly. Large springs underneath limit bruising (\$130; [brookssengland.com](#)).

▼ **WATER BOTTLES** Look for a bottle that's BPA-free and has a capacity of around 22 ounces, such as the Clean Bottle, which also provides a removable bottom for easy cleaning (\$10; [cleanbottle.com](#)).

▲ **HANDLEBAR BAG** You'll need easy access to a few key items, such as a map, a camera, and some snacks. The Ortlieb Ultimate5 Plus has a reflective front and comes with a shoulder strap, providing you with a satchel to use at camp or in town (\$110; [ortliebusa.com](#)).

◀ **PEDALS & SHOES** The nature of long-distance cycling means you'll be getting off your bike frequently. Go for recessed-cleat pedals, such as the Shimano M520 SPD (\$55; [shimano.com](#)), and a pair of Giro Code shoes, which have adjustable arch supports and durable rubber treading — and also let you walk around normally (\$280; [giro.com](#)).

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

LET THESE SEVEN ITEMS TRANSFORM YOUR AVERAGE BIKE TOUR INTO A FIRST-CLASS ONE.



HELMET

The **Giro Ionos** has more than 20 vents that will keep you cool no matter your ride's intensity — and they don't compromise protection (\$235; [giro.com](#)).



COMPRESSION SHORTS

The **Assos H.FI.Uno** shorts are specially engineered to compress your quads and hamstrings rather than your groin (\$190; [assos.com](#)).



SUNGLASSES

Tifosi Roubaix sunglasses come with adjustable ear and nose pieces, and three sets of interchangeable lenses, for a variety of conditions (\$60; [tifosioptics.com](#)).



WINDBREAKER

The **Skins USA C400 Wind Jacket** fits snugly, eliminating bulk, and it moves easily with your body. It's also breathable (\$270; [skinsusa.com](#)).

BIKERS: COURTESY ORTLIEB; SHORTS AND PUMP: MICHAEL PIRROCCO



CYCLOMETER

The **Cateye CC-RD300W** displays distance, time, and variations of speed (current, average, top) on a big screen. And it does so wirelessly (\$65; [cateye.com](#)).



GLOVES

A pair of **Giro LX** is durable, well ventilated, and built to wick sweat. The gel pads distribute vibrations, keeping your palms from going numb (\$65; [giro.com](#)).



PUMP

The **Genuine Innovations Ultraflate Plus** employs a CO₂ cartridge to inflate your tires fully in less than five seconds. A lock on the trigger prevents unintentional discharge (\$20; [genuineinnovations.com](#)).

DIGITAL LOWDOWN

5 APPS FOR THE TOURING BIKER



TO UPDATE YOUR STATUS

You can follow your exact route, in real time, on your smartphone via the free app from **MapMyRide**, which also records your distance, pace, change in elevation, and calories burned. Then you can share the data via e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter. And, in turn, your friends can track your progress on the company's website.



TO STAY IN RANGE

If you plan on biking in a remote area without cell phone coverage, first download the app from **Spot Connect**, which, through a separately purchased Spot device links your GPS-enabled smartphone to a satellite and, in emergency situations, lets you broadcast an SOS signal, as well as send brief e-mails and text messages. You must also purchase a service plan (\$170; [findmespot.com](#)).



TO MEET UP NOW

The free **Rendezvous** app from Rapha Racing simplifies the process of finding fellow cyclists. Learn the location of other riders, and watch as they advance toward rendezvous points. You can also inform other riders of any delays you encounter.



TO FIX IT FAST

The **BikeDoctor** app will answer all your bike-maintenance and repair questions, providing step-by-step directions for even the simplest tasks (\$4.99; [iTunes](#)).



TO FIND A BED

For the nights that a campsite won't cut it, use the free app from **AirBnB.com** to find an inexpensive spot to lay your head. It won't be fancy — you'll most likely find a spare bedroom in someone's house — but it will be clean and affordable. AirBnB.com lists rooms in 13,000 cities, and the app lets you read dozens of reviews from past guests.

PERFECT BIKE RIDES

For long-distance bicycling itineraries, go to [mensjournal.com/bicyclingtours](#)